
**Joint Meeting of the
DULUTH-SUPERIOR
METROPOLITAN INTERSTATE COUNCIL
and the
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING SUMMARY
Wednesday, August 17, 2005**

Hermantown Public Safety Facility
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN

MIC Members Present

Broc Allen, Douglas Co Suburban Twps
Nick Baker, Douglas County
David Bilden, City of Superior
David Conley, Douglas County
Bill Eckman, Douglas County
Earl Elde, St Louis Co Suburban Twps
Bob Finsland, City of Superior
Dick Kieren, City of Proctor
Keith MacDonald, City of Hermantown
Kay McKenzie, Douglas County
Isobel Rapaich, DTA Board
Peg Sweeney, St. Louis County

MIC Members Absent

Ed Anderson, City of Superior*
Esther Dalbec, City of Superior*
Wayne Jordahl, St Louis Co Suburban Twps
Rob Stenberg, City of Duluth*
Jim Stauber, City of Duluth*
Russ Stover, City of Duluth*

TAC Members Present

John Foschi, City of Proctor
Martin Forbes, WisDOT (alt)
Chuck Froseth, City of Duluth
Denny Johnson, MnDOT

Others Present

Sherry Berhow, MIC Intern
Holly Butcher, MIC Staff
James Gittemeier, MIC Staff
Michael Huber, BC/BS of MN
Sheldon Johnson, MIC Deputy Director/NWRPC
Andy McDonald, MIC Staff
Jim Skoog, St. Louis Co Public Health Dept

1. Introductions/Agenda Review

Wisconsin Co-Chair Nick Baker called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Meeting participants introduced themselves and welcomed visitor Jim Skoog from the St. Louis County Public Health Department and guest speaker Michael Huber from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota.

2. Guest Speaker

James Gittemeier introduced Michael Huber, Director of Cardiovascular Health Initiatives

at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota. He began by noting that he would be presenting just a portion of the information to be covered at the upcoming daylong seminar entitled 'Health Implications of Community Design: Activating Neighborhoods,' to be held in Duluth on October 25, 2005.

He went on to discuss recent research showing the dramatic increases in obesity rates in every state since 1985, and other studies demonstrating the positive effects of modest physical activity levels in reducing disease rates, improving mental health and lowering health care costs. To this end, he discussed the recent interest in the public health field in examining the effects of the built environment on the activity level of residents. He showed examples of contemporary suburban design that tended to discourage walking and biking. He cited the website www.activelivingleadership.org and its 'physical inactivity cost model' as good resources for information about policies and programs that enable active living to improve the health and well-being of communities.

During the discussion, he acknowledged that a broad range of issues contributes to the health and lifestyle of individuals and the places they live, but that the bottom line was that when we have the opportunity to do so, there are many compelling reasons to make community design decisions that help people make choices for a more active lifestyle.

He closed by asking meeting participants to look for the information to be sent to all MIC and TAC members by mail and email about the upcoming Health Implications conference.

3. 2006-2008 Draft Wisconsin Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Sheldon Johnson distributed and reviewed copies of the draft Superior Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program for 2006-2008. He reviewed the projects included in the draft as well as the strategies being used to solicit public comment. He requested that the MIC and TAC formally release the draft for the required 30-day comment period before the final version is presented for approval at the October meetings.

Bob Finsland/Peg Sweeney moved to release the draft for public comment for the required 30-day public comment period. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Rice Lake Road Corridor Study Scope of Work

Holly Butcher presented the final Scope of Work for the upcoming Rice Lake Road Corridor Study, and reviewed the comments incorporated after last month's discussion with the TAC. The goal of this study is to identify solutions to improve safety, access, and roadway functionality on the section of Rice Lake Road between Arrowhead Road and Central Entrance. She noted that the first step in the study process was to request that steering committee members supply any available data (new housing, new streets, traffic counts, etc.) for use in the Travel Demand Model. Other tasks will include holding a

neighborhood issues identification meeting, conducting traffic counts at selected intersections and working with the Steering Committee to develop recommendations. She closed by requesting approval for the Scope of Work

Bill Eckman/Isobel Rapaich moved to approve the Scope of Work for the Rice Lake Road Corridor Study as presented. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. 2006-2007 Work Program Survey Results

Sheldon Johnson reviewed the list of potential projects as prioritized by the MIC and TAC for inclusion in the 2006-2007 Work Program and Budget. The 5 top-ranked plans from the survey, received back from 9 MIC members and 12 TAC members, included (in Duluth) a London Road Corridor Plan; a 40th Avenue-46th Avenue West Alignment Study; a UMD-area Transportation Assessment; a Woodland Avenue Corridor Plan; and in Superior, an East 2nd Street Access Management Plan. Sheldon noted that because the scores for these projects were relatively close, there might be some other projects included in the final Work Program after various jurisdictions are consulted about their priorities.

He added that Ron Chicka would be presenting a draft version of the Work Program at next month's meetings. The draft would include timelines and preliminary budgets for each project, as well.

6. Hermantown Section 13 Circulation Analysis

James Gittemeier reported that MIC staff met with URS to discuss the modified results for the small area model (Synchro). He displayed the revised data inputs (future development information and planned roadway improvements) and presented the latest findings from the Synchro model. He closed by noting that a draft plan would be presented for review at next month's meeting.

7. Project Updates

Long Range Transportation Plan

Holly Butcher reported that the public comment period on the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan ended July 30th. Numerous agency comments were received from MnDOT, FHWA, WisDOT and MPCA over the course of the comment period. Various public comments were submitted during the 45-day period as well, including:

- Adding the topic of passenger light rail into the final plan (six letters, plus Duluth News Tribune Editorial)
- Addressing congestion issues on London Road (one letter, one public meeting attendee)

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- Martin Road Alignment concerns, preference extend Lismore east toward Homestead and west toward US 53 (one letter)
 - Request that MIC consider the use of REMI (Regional Economic Models, Inc.) data in transportation planning (one letter)

SR2S-Duluth

Holly Butcher reported that she had presented the Scope of Work for the upcoming Safe Routes to School project to the Business Committee of the Duluth School Board on August 16th. The presentation included some background information about SR2S concepts in general, as well as information about recent successes in obtaining funding for SR2S recommendations to be implemented in Superior.

Priority Pedestrian Pathways in Duluth

Holly Butcher reported that on July 25th she facilitated a final meeting of this group to unveil a GIS model displaying the top 20% of sidewalks used in the city, connected by DTA routes. The pathway group had devised the GIS criteria that identified these routes. The group also discussed how to unveil this concept to public and private stakeholders and the city council. She added that various city departments including human rights, public works, planning, GIS, and the DTA would continue work on this topic

Minnesota MPO Directors Conference

James Gittemeier reported that he had attended the 2005 Minnesota MPO Conference, the annual gathering of the MPOs across the state geared toward exchanging ideas and exhibiting best practices, on August 11 & 12 in East Grand Forks, MN. A range of subject matter was covered from federal and state legislation to demographic forecasting to land use planning. Each MPO was given an hour time slot to present a project and he presented the Hermantown Section 13 Circulation Analysis as well as an update on current MIC bikeway planning efforts.

Federal Transportation Bill (SAFETEA-LU)

James Gittemeier reported on the information he received at the MPO Conference about the recently approved federal legislation reauthorizing the transportation program through 2009. Called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (or SAFETEA-LU for short), the bill authorizes \$286.5 billion for highways and transit, a 42% increase over the last federal bill in 1997. The bill also authorizes \$121,313,556 over six years for 57 high priority projects in Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District. Additionally, Congressman Dave Obey of Wisconsin's Seventh Congressional District secured two projects for the City of Superior totaling \$1.5 million. In total, the Duluth-Superior metropolitan area received \$18 million additional federal funds for transportation projects.

He added that SAFETEA-LU also places a new emphasis on safety- and security-conscious planning, congestion mitigation and the movement of freight; includes expanded public participation requirements to ensure that bike and pedestrian interests are considered in the transportation planning process; encourages earlier involvement and more coordination with local planning officials; and requires consultation with state and local agencies responsible for natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation. Finally, it adds specific requirements to make planning information available in electronic formats, including the World Wide Web.

8. Announcements

Chair Baker asked people to review the summary of meeting attendance for the past year and expressed concern that some members had an attendance rate of less than 50 percent. He suggested that this topic be taken up again at next month's MIC meeting.

9. Adjournment

With no further agenda items or announcements, Chair Stenberg adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rondi Watson
MIC Division Secretary